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CWW Graduate Student Research

The findings of this project are expected to be of interest for academic researchers, social policy makers, and business communities as well as the media and members of the broader public concerned with the role of women in the state's economy. In addition, although occupational segregation or the earning gaps are not likely to disappear overnight, growing transparency about this issue will definitely contribute to substantial movement in that direction.

Lana Tsurikova: Work/Family Balance for Psychology Professionals in Massachusetts

The topic of Lana's thesis is work/family balance among psychotherapists and counselors in Massachusetts. She will conduct 15 to 20 interviews to ask participants about their experiences in balancing work and family roles. She is interested in learning whether they perceive their own work/family roles as a permanent conflict or as a manageable balance, whether their family responsibilities restrict their career success or enhance it, and whether their professional knowledge helps them balance their work and family lives. Careful attention will be paid to any specific issues related to their profession and potential work burnout.

Dianne Cazeca: The Effect of Gendered Work Climates on Health and Work Outcomes

Dianne received the Francis College of Engineering Student Research Poster Award this spring for her poster entitled "The Effect of Gendered Work Climates on Health and Work Outcomes."

This work was carried out in collaboration with CWW Co-Directors Meg A. Bond and Jean L. Pyle, Laura Punnett of Work Environment, and Manuela Cooperman, a recent graduate in Community Psychology. The multidisciplinary team has merged the perspectives of psychology, occupational health, and economics to explore the ways in which gendered dynamics of the work environment (i.e., sexism, discrimination, and organizational responsiveness to discrimination), job demands (psychological and physical), and social support can affect individuals' physical and mental health, as well as their work performance and satisfaction. This study of non-faculty university employees further examined how these relationships differed, not only between men and women, but also among those in female-dominated, gender-balanced, and male-dominated jobs. The complex relationships between gendered aspects of the work climate, job demands, social support, and health and work outcomes were found to differ according to gender, as well as by the gender ratio of one's job. A manuscript detailing the findings of this study has been completed and the multidisciplinary team is taking steps to further this research.

Forum Highlights Women's Activism Around the World

The Center for Women and Work's annual "Gathering at the Well" forum April 11 focused on the highly relevant and timely topic "How are Women Changing the World? Activists Bridging Differences" and featured women's activism locally, nationally and internationally.

This year's keynote speakers were Dr. Dorothy Burlage and Sue Thrasher, both civil rights activists in the 1960s and two of the nine authors of a book entitled "Deep in Our Hearts—Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement." They brought the audience a vivid view of women's activism in the United States at this time, setting their reflections on their personal experiences in the context of the prevailing "culture" of the U.S. south. Their deep commitment to this movement had many rewards, the substantial costs notwithstanding.

They were joined by two community members who talked about women's activism in diverse populations in Lowell: Maria Cunha spoke about her involvement in the Portuguese community around voting and government representation and Nancy Moore Diaz discussed her work in the Local Black Network with at-risk city youths.

At an international level, Anne Brodsky and Alicia Lucksted, who

are working with the progressive Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), made a lunchtime presentation. They shared some of their previous and on-going cooperative activities with RAWA with the audience and showed slides of a recent trip to the Afghan refugee camps. The pictures documented the varying and often appalling conditions in the refugee camps.



Dorothy Burlage, left, and Sue Thrasher, right, were keynote speakers at the Center for Women and Work's annual "Gathering at the Well" forum. With them is Assoc. Prof. Joyce Gibson, co-director of the Center for Family, Work and Community.

The forum also featured a poster exhibit depicting local, national and international examples of women's activism. Many of them were designed by women from countries other than the United States. Among the poster presenters were: Linda Ajileye (Nigeria), Anne Brodsky and Alicia Lucksted (Afghanistan), Yingying Deng (China), Elisabeth Satya Dewi (Indonesia), Sivan Daniel (Israel),

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CWW Joins Celebration During Lowell Women's Week

The Center for Women and Work (CWW) sponsored two events during Lowell Women's Week — March 3 to 9 — the showing of an important new film and the First International Women's Roundtable. In keeping with this year's theme of Lowell Women's Week, "Women Across Cultures: Surviving and Thriving in an Uncertain World," the CWW showed a 50-minute version of the recently released film "5 Girls" at Lowell High School on March 5. The film chronicles three years in the lives of five girls from diverse backgrounds, showing their resilience and intelligence in navigating the often-difficult adolescent years. It was followed by a panel discussion with audience participation.

On International Women's Day, March 8, the CWW and its Work/Life Integration Network co-hosted the first International Women's Roundtable Discussion at the Dove Café in downtown Lowell. This event was specially designed to feature women who were born in countries all over the world, but who now reside in the United States. Women from countries such as Albania, China, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Nigeria, Poland, Puerto Rico, the Ukraine, and South Korea shared their perspectives on women's situations in their respective countries. Based on their personal experiences and those of their parents, they told stories that were remarkably similar. Concerns were raised on the widening gap between women's lives in the city and country, the dual pressure of paid work and unpaid housework on women, and the general mentality that women are inferior (which is strengthened by religious beliefs and ethnic traditions like Confucianism). The varied situation of women in the U.S. was also brought to discussion at the audience's request and issues such as geography, class, race and ethnicity were proposed to explain the existence of such variations. Participants then enjoyed a performance provided by the O'Halloran Irish Dancing Troupe.

LWW featured various events, programs, and exhibits throughout the city organized by many other community groups—such as Women's Week Breakfast and the highly acclaimed "Vagina Monologues."

Presentations:

CWW members will be participating in the Third International Congress on Women, Work and Health to be held in Stockholm, Sweden, June 2-5. This Conference is being sponsored by the National Institute for Working Life, an organization the CWW has been working with for several years. Jean L. Pyle will deliver a keynote address, "Globalization, Public Policy and the Gendered Division of Labor." Meg A. Bond, Laura Punnett and Jean Pyle will present a paper based on center research entitled "Gender, Diversity and Work" at one of the conference sessions.

Center for Women & Work

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CWW Project Provides Workplace Diversity Training

Developing effective approaches to the increasingly diverse workforce in the United States is essential for supporting a healthy society. The Center for Women and Work has developed a six-year collaboration to address issues of workplace diversity with a manufacturing firm in northeastern Massachusetts, which has taken a proactive approach to both employing a diverse workforce and promoting positive relations among diverse workers.

Members of the UMass Lowell Workplace Diversity Project, under the guidance of Co-Director Meg Bond, began working with Eastman Gelatine in 1995 when the company expressed interest in better understanding the way race and gender dynamics affect workers. Jointly, the group developed the *Workplace Chemistry Initiative* guided by the following mission statement: "To create a work environment at Eastman Gelatine where every individual regardless of race, gender, and/or disability can work at their best by creating a culture of flexibility and sense of inclusion where all people feel wanted and appreciated."

The shared interest in working to better utilize a diverse workforce has enabled both Eastman Gelatine and UMass Lowell to establish a long-term relationship, which began with interviews and then extended to a plant-wide survey to identify central areas of concern. The initial assessment guided subsequent work with an internal team to develop a workplace diversity training curriculum. The training has been offered to about half of the 200-employee plant. CWW is currently working on an analysis of changes over time and an evaluation of the diversity training conducted thus far.

Take Note

"Beneath the Veil," a documentary film on Afghan women's lives under the Taliban by Saira Shah, a woman of Afghan descent, is now available through UMass Lowell Media Center on South Campus. Call 978-934-4557 for more information.

Graduate Student Research

The Center for Women and Work encourages graduate students to develop thesis topics or projects that involve research on issues related to women and work. Faculty provide guidance and encourage students to present their work at conferences and participate in publications.

This spring we will feature Yingying Deng, Lana Tsurikova and Dianne Cazeca.

These students are fulfilling the Center's mission of addressing the reciprocal relationship between women's work and the well-being of larger communities. Readers who are interested in the possibility of developing similar future collaborations, may contact the Center.



Three graduate students who have developed thesis topics or projects involving research on issues related to women and work are, from left, Yingying Deng (RESO), Dianne Cazeca (Work Environment) and Lana Tsurikova (Community Psychology).

Yingying Deng: The Changing Role of Women in the Massachusetts Economy: Are The Gender Gaps Closing?

Yingying is involved in a project with CWW Co-Director Jean L. Pyle that will offer an in-depth analysis of the changing roles of working women in Massachusetts from 1980 to 2000. Her research is funded by a grant from the Committee on Industrial Theory and Assessment (CITA).

Given the fast-paced changes in the state economy during the past three decades and the emergence of particular growth sectors, the research team wants to examine how women have fared and what has happened to the gaps between men and women. They will look at major industries and occupations in Massachusetts to see where women are concentrated vis-a-vis men and how the situation has changed both within and across industries. They will focus mainly on sectors at the 2-digit SIC level. Special emphasis will, however, be given to a few key 3-digit growth sectors where men have traditionally been in a dominant position.

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Work/Life Integration Network Pushes For Protection of the State's Poor

The Work/Life Integration Network is currently involved in sponsoring a petition drive to collect signatures in support of Massachusetts state legislation that would establish a Self Sufficiency Standard of living. This standard would help organizations and policy makers establish programs and reforms based on a more realistic estimate of base line costs of living in different cities in Massachusetts than the present poverty levels of income. It would contribute to the creation and implementation of more effective and permanent remedies to poverty in our state. The drive began in the Lowell area during Lowell Women's Week when petitions were placed at key events around the city and will continue through late May.

During the past year, the Work/Life Integration Network has been devoted to its stated goal of promoting more balanced work/life conditions for working women and men, especially the poor. Actions taken include empowering poor women through legislative and policy changes, making connections across diverse economic and social organizations,

and recognizing contradictions and conflicts in real life and in cultural values. The network holds a breakfast meeting one Thursday a month at Middlesex Community College (MCC) and sponsored several events during the Lowell Women's Week.

This group is celebrating its one-year anniversary in May—thanks to the commitment and effort made by Sue Harris from the Center for Women and Work and Marianne Pelletier from Middlesex Community College. It was initiated May 2001 when participants at the CWW's Forum "Can Women Work and Have a Life Too? An Issue of Concern for Women and Men" wanted to continue the dialogue around work/life integration issues. It includes people who work at Community Teamwork Inc., MCC, UMass Lowell, and the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau.

Anyone interested in signing the petition or joining the group should contact Sue Harris at wellfleet2@aol.com or call the Center at 978-934-4380.

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Forum Highlights Women's Activism Around the World

Alketa Kalaja and Anila Bello (Albania), Pia Markkanen (Finland), Marlowe Miller (Czech Republic), Maria Montes (Bolivia), Emily Neal and Anne Mulvey, Youngju Seo (South Korea), Erin Sheehan, Jasmine Sicotte and Anne Mulvey, and Lana Tsurikova (Ukraine).

This forum was sponsored by the Center for Women and Work in collaboration with Lorin Kerr Ergonomics Institute and was funded by the UMass Lowell Council on Diversity & Pluralism and the Council of Federated Committees and Institutes.

The Center for Women and Work has recently updated its e-mail list. This list is used primarily to inform list members of new issues relevant to women and work, actions that can be taken, and to announce interesting events on and off campus that pertain to women-work issues. E-mail yingying_d@hotmail.com if you would like to be added to this list.

Watts Speaks on Theory and Action in Liberation Psychology

Liberation Psychology seeks to identify those societal forces and experiences that connect, rather than separate, diverse groups of people. On Feb. 25, Dr. Rod Watts from Georgia State University met with some UMass Lowell faculty and students and shared his work on manhood development and the ways this issue can be combined with the principles of liberation psychology to strengthen communities. Dr. Watts spoke at a breakfast discussion with about 30 community members, then came to campus to give a talk to students and faculty in honor of the Black History month. Both events were sponsored by the graduate program in community social psychology and Psi Chi of the Department of Psychology, and co-sponsored by the Center for Women and Work, the Department of Regional Economic and Social Development, and the Council on Diversity and Pluralism.